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PLAN FOR SHORTENING THE TRANSIT BETWEEN NEW YORK AND LONDON—
EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN RAILWAY—PUBLIC LANDS.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. I. WASHBURN, JR., OF MAINE,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 10, 1852.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the bill for the encouragement of agriculture, manufactures, and other branches of industry, by granting to actual settlers homesteads out of the public domain, &c.—

Mr. WASHBURN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will so far depart from the line of debate which has been taken by gentlemen who have preceded me, as to abstain from the discussion of the claims and qualifications of candidates for the Presidency. The party with which I act will, in due time, place in nomination for that office a gentleman whose ability, fitness, and patriotism will need no advocacy on this floor, and whose cause is safe in the hearts and hands of the American people. I propose to submit at this time a few observations upon the matters embraced in a memorial which I had the honor to present to the House sometime ago, in which application is made for a grant of land to the State of Maine, in aid of an important and truly national work—the European and North American railway,—and to state some of the reasons why, in my judgment, the aid should be granted which has been prayed for. The memorial also asks for the passage of a law authorizing a permanent contract for carrying the mails between New York and Galway, and over this railroad.

In stating the grounds upon which the memorialists rely, it will be necessary for me to refer to some facts and statistics. From Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Galway in Ireland, the distance is two thousand one hundred and thirty miles. From the nearest available harbor to Cape Canso on the most eastern point of Nova Scotia—that of Whitehaven—in latitude $45^{\circ} 10'$ north and in longitude $61^{\circ} 3'$ west, to Galway, in latitude $53^{\circ} 13'$ north and in longitude $9^{\circ} 13'$ west, the distance is about two thousand miles. Whitehaven, according to a report made by Admiral Owen to Sir John Harvey in 1846, "is a most splendid and commodious port, at the nearest available point of North America to Ireland." And Galway harbor is well known to be one of the finest in the world, pos-

sessing great advantages over Bristol or Liverpool as a steam-ship terminus.

From Galway to Dublin, a distance of one hundred and twenty-six miles, a line of railway is in progress of construction, if, indeed, it is not already completed. From Dublin, the distance of sixty-three miles across the Irish Channel, to Holyhead, is passed with steam-packets, at the rate of eighteen miles an hour, to which place the Chester and Holyhead railway is already finished, connecting with Liverpool and London—crossing the Menai Strait by the Britannia tubular bridge, which was opened for traffic on the 18th of March, 1850; the distance from Holyhead to London by rail being two hundred and sixty-three miles.

The memorial which I have presented states, and I have no doubt on the best authority, that able parties are ready to place the required steamers on the route, from Halifax or Whitehaven to Galway, whenever the connection by railway shall have been made between New York and either of those ports. It will be my purpose to show that such connection is both feasible and desirable.

From New York to Waterville in Maine, a distance of four hundred and ten miles, there is in operation a continuous line of railway. From Waterville to Bangor, fifty miles, a charter has been obtained for a railroad, which no doubt will be built by local enterprise and capital at an early day.

The European and North American railway in Maine has been incorporated by the Legislature of that State, and an exploration and survey made by an able Engineer, under the authority and at the expense of the State—\$7,000 having been appropriated for that purpose, and for the publication of the report of the Engineer and other important papers bearing upon the enterprise. The report of the Engineer shows that, from Bangor to the eastern line of the State and the point of connection with the road in the Province of New Brunswick, the length of road to be built in Maine will be from eighty-five to one hundred miles, according to the route

that may be finally adopted, and may be constructed at a cost falling something below \$3,000,000. Acts of incorporation have been granted by the Legislatures of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to the European and North American railway within those provinces, respectively, and grants of the public domain made, and other aid pledged, as will be seen by reference to the acts of legislation which accompany the memorial that has been presented to Congress, and which will secure, beyond doubt or contingency, the construction of the road from the eastern line of Maine to the city of Halifax, or the town of Whitehaven. What is now wanted, and ALL that is wanted, to accomplish this great work—than which none of larger importance to the nation can claim the public attention—is, the means to build that part of the European and North American railway which lies within the State of Maine—between Bangor and the line of New Brunswick. The road from Waterville, or Augusta, to Bangor will nearly absorb the capital that can be obtained for such investment in that part of the State. The means of Bangor and vicinity will be required to extend the road to that place from the west; and as the territory, north and east, through which the route of the European and North American road lies, is thinly settled—in truth, for half the distance an almost unbroken wilderness—it is easily perceived that the capital required for so considerable a work, involving an expenditure of nearly \$3,000,000, cannot be obtained in that section of country. As the road will be of no merely local advantage or character, it is not unreasonable that the funds necessary to build it should be drawn, to some extent, from other portions of the country than the immediate vicinity of its location—from the parties who will derive most certain and substantial benefits from its construction—the people of all the States in the Union.

I will now state, briefly and clearly as I may be able, some of the advantages which I think will be likely to result from the grant of the aid prayed for in this case. A continuous line of railway will be put in operation from the city of New York—nay, from all the considerable cities from New Orleans to Portland—to the easternmost available harbor on the continent; a daily line of steam-ships, of the greatest practicable speed and capacity, will be put upon the international ferry between the two hemispheres, and the passage between New York and London reduced to a period of six days' time.

The memorial states:

"Experience has now established, as a general rule, the fact, that the useful speed of railway trains may, under all possible circumstances, be three times as great as that of a steam-ship or sailing vessel. The advantage gained and the time saved in the passage of the mails between New York and London, by adopting the plan proposed, over the present international postal system, may be stated as follows:

From New York to London.

	Miles.	Days.	Hours.
Railway from New York to Halifax....	867	-	17
Steamer from Halifax to Galway....	2,130	5	5
Railway from Galway to Dublin....	136	-	2½
Steamer from Dublin to Holyhead....	63	-	3
Railway from Holyhead to London..	263	-	5
	3,449	6	8½

"In the foregoing estimate, a speed of railway transit is assumed such as is employed on the English express trains, and the speed of the steamer is taken at one third the time allowed for the passage of the railway train. Allowing three and a half hours for shifting the mails and baggage, and the time occupied in the transmission of the mails from New

York to London is six and one half days, employing the present rates of speed on the most approved and best conducted railways in England.

"Applying the same rates of speed to the present route from New York to London, and the result is as follows:

	Miles.	Days.	Hours.
Steamer from New York to Liverpool..	3,100	7	14
Railway from Liverpool to London..	211	-	5
		7	19

"Difference in favor of the European and North American railway route, one day ten and a half hours.

"But this comparison by no means does justice to the relative advantages of the two routes. Steam-boats, like race-horses, go with increased speed as you reduce the unnecessary load, and by the shorter sea-route, may undoubtedly be increased equal to two miles per hour for the entire voyage. Assuming the correctness of the foregoing statement, the following result is shown:

	Days.	Hours.
Steamer from New York to Liverpool.....	8	14½
Railway from Liverpool to London.....	-	5
	8	19½

"Difference in favor of the European and Galway route, two days, eleven hours—equal to fifty-nine hours saved.

"The chances would be in favor of the longest land route and the short sea-voyage. The certainty attainable in railway transit, the facilities for repairing accidents and supplying improved engines to make up for detentions, on the one side, and the risks of a long sea-voyage on the other—accumulating almost with geometric progression with the distance—significantly urge the adoption of the proposed plan.

"The greatest speed yet attained in an Atlantic sea-voyage, was by the American steam-ship Pacific (a shorter passage has been made since this petition was drawn up) during the past year, averaging a speed of thirty and one eighth miles per hour for the entire distance—having made the run from Liverpool to New York in nine days twenty hours and fifteen minutes.

"The speed of ocean steamers has increased very much in the ratio of their size, and it is not hazardous much to say, that within the next five years a uniform speed of seventeen miles an hour may be reached in ocean steam navigation by the adoption of the shortest passage across the Atlantic.

"We have assumed a speed of railway transit beyond any uniform attainment in this country; but those least informed in the practical working of railway machinery know that at present the question of speed is a mere question of cost, and has no reference to the absolute capacity for speed of the locomotive engine employed in railway transit. The only limit to the speed of a railway train is the strength of material, and increased attention to the construction of railway machinery will enable the locomotive engine, in due time, to measure speed with the wind."

Mr. Chairman, there can be no reasonable doubt that, whenever by means of improvements in the construction and working of steam-vessels, the passage between New York and Liverpool can be made by the present route in nine days, a degree of improvement will have been attained in steam-ship and railway performance, which will as certainly permit the transit, by Canoe and Galway, to be made in six days. Considering that nearly half the quantity of coal required for the long sea route will be dispensed with on the other, and the causes of detention in St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea, and on our own coast avoided, I hazard little in the prediction that the average time of transit between New York and London, by the proposed route, will not much exceed one half the time that will be required upon the present routes. Practical and scientific gentlemen of the first eminence in the country, who have carefully examined this plan, have expressed the conviction that it will effect a saving of at least one third of the time consumed by the routes now used. It is well known that the principal dangers, difficulties, and delays experienced, are in consequence of the fogs and storms encountered in the

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navigation of St. George's Channel, and on the coast between Nova Scotia and New York. The commerce and intercourse between this country and Europe is rapidly increasing. Our commercial necessities, the habits of the people, and the spirit of the age, demand the employment of every facility for shortening and cheapening the transit between them. Nothing can be more legible to the understandings of men who have any appreciation of what is demanded by the physical, intellectual, and social activities of the times, than that this project, if the statements and deductions I have made are correct, must be carried out, and cannot be long delayed. The case is one of those plain and palpable ones that do not admit of hesitation, or give room for cavil; one that compels conviction by its own force.

In this busy and steaming life of ours, this day of competition, enterprise, and unprecedented activity, the saving of half a week's time, or of a single day even, determines the whole question. The regularity and certainty of the passage by this route, as compared with any other, will not fail to be regarded as considerations in its favor of great weight; while the fact that it reduces the sea-voyage one half will not escape the attention of those who have experienced the sea-sickness and discomforts incident to such a voyage.

The laws of trade and commercial and social intercourse, as bearing upon this question, are plain and decisive. The late General Dearborn, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, in an able and very eloquent speech before the Portland Convention—a convention of the friends of this enterprise, assembled from different sections of the United States and the British Provinces, in 1850, said:

"All history and all experience show that the necessities of commerce seek out the nearest and shortest routes for travel and business. Calais and Dover have been the points of embarkation ever since the invasion of Caesar; and for no other reason but because they were the nearest points between the island of Great Britain and the continent of Europe. Cape Sunium was the point of concentration for the trade of Greece, simply because it was the nearest point to Egypt. Why was the Appian Way extended from Capua to Brundisium, on the Adriatic Gulf? Because that was the nearest good harbor near the narrowest place in the Adriatic sea, in the most direct line from Rome to Constantinople. Why was the suspension bridge of Telford extended across the Menai Strait to the Isle of Anglesey; and the still more wonderful work of modern times, the Britannia Bridge across the same straits? Because it was in the most direct line from London to Dublin and Ireland. If you will examine the map of the world, you will find that, in all time past, the points of continents or islands, which approach the nearest, have become the highways of their intercourse and commerce. It is for this reason that I believe that the highway for the trade and communication between this country and Europe must be made to the eastern coast of Nova Scotia."

Nothing is wanting to secure the construction of this highway and the realization of the idea of its projector—a conception as grand as it was simple—but the aid of this Government to a limited extent; and which, in the form of a grant of a small portion of our unoccupied lands, can be accorded without embarrassing its finances or violating any sound principle of public policy. But, sir, this road cannot be built without such aid. It is not of sufficient local importance, nor is there the local capital, if it were, to warrant the undertaking. With the assurance that it will be granted, private enterprise and capital may be relied upon for its successful prosecution and completion.

In continuing the statement of the advantages

to the people of the United States that will be derived from the establishment of this line of international communication, and of the reasons why it is believed that the General Government should grant the aid that has been solicited, I would call your attention to certain facts and considerations.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, is in telegraphic communication with every considerable city in the United States and the British Provinces, and the day is not distant when that communication will be extended to the Pacific ocean. London is connected by telegraph with the principal capitals of Europe; and a survey of the progress made in this line of improvement, within the last five years, can leave no reasonable doubt that within the next five this connection will be extended, on the one hand to the extreme limits of Europe, if not into Asia, and on the other, by submarine lines across the Channel, to Galway, in Ireland. Then, with a line of steamers of the first class in size and speed, making the passage between Galway and Nova Scotia in five days, (the establishment of which depends upon the opening of railway facilities for passengers and business between Waterville and Nova Scotia,) London, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Constantinople, if not Calcutta and Canton, will be within six days time of New York, Charleston, New Orleans, and St. Louis. What enterprise of the present day, so simple and so feasible, and to be secured at such small expense, should command the attention and receive the patronage of the people, and of the Government, so readily as this? Its benefits will be enjoyed by every State—in the South and in the North, in the West and in the East—as well upon the shores of the Pacific, in California and far Oregon, as upon the Atlantic. Will it not be of very great advantage to the merchant of New Orleans, the cotton broker, and ship-owner, to be able to transmit or receive intelligence to or from any port in Europe in less than a week? Will the business men in our cities think lightly of the benefits conferred upon them, by enabling them to visit the commercial capitals of the Old World without the hazards and inconveniences of a long sea voyage, and in two thirds of the time that will be required by any other route?

What single measure can the sanction and limited aid of the Government assure, from which a moiety of the benefits could result that would inevitably flow to the people and the nation from this? I feel that I am standing here upon strong ground; that the positions I maintain must be commended to the judgments of men from every section of the country, and of all shades of opinion as to the power and duty of the Government to lend its aid to works of public interest and importance. Grant all that has ever been contended for by the strictest constructionists, and concede the most that can be desired by those who would limit the action of Congress in questions of internal improvements, and I will confidently ask them to support this application, believing that they may do so without the violation of any principle which they regard as important. Why, sir, no grant for the removal of obstructions in our harbors, or for the erection of light-houses and breakwaters, can be of more truly national interest and character, or more clearly within the legitimate scope of the powers of the Government. No expenditure of millions of dollars upon our coasts can confer such

certain, demonstrable, and unquestionable advantage and protection to our commerce as would be conferred by the establishment of the proposed line of communication. It would keep the owner and his vessel, in whatever European or Asiatic port the latter might be, separated by less than a single week. It would enable communications, whether of accident, of market, or of destination, to be made and answered without injurious detention or delay. It would reduce the rates of insurance and the prices of freights. It would place the fishing fleets of Gloucester and Cape Cod, upon the coasts of Nova Scotia, in communication with the owners at home by a railway transit that might be performed in less than a day.

There is another point of view from which this work presents a truly national character: it is as a means and implement of national defense. Traversing a territory so near the coast, yet not upon it, to the very frontier of the Republic, and connected, as it will be, in its branches and intersections, with every other railroad in the country, it will be of greater service and importance in this respect, than any mere works of protection and fortification that can be erected by the outlay of many millions. On this point I do not speak unadvisedly, or without book. I quote from an admirable letter of Lieutenant Maury, United States Navy, addressed to the Portland committee, July 24, 1850. Having remarked that—

"It [this railway] will connect with railroads from Montreal, Quebec, and Boston; and in view of the consequence which these lines will give it, you eloquently describe it a 'grand trunk line of railway from the State of Maine to the lower British Provinces.' It is only one of the topmost branches; the main trunk extends from the West to the East, from the North to the South, and has its tap-root planted in the heart of the Mississippi valley.

"There is already in contemplation, in process of construction or actually completed, a grand trunk line of railroads all the way from Portland, in Maine, to Memphis, in Tennessee, and other points on the Mississippi river. To complete such a trunk you cannot go amiss for friends and advocates, for its branches are everywhere. Whether you go among the mountains of New England, or the lakes of Canada—in the plains of the South, or the forests of the West—wherever you sound the car whistle for this line of road, you will see the friends of the measure, like Rhoderick Dhu's men, starting up from every bush and bank, in ready response to the call.

"At the speed of Collins's steamers—and we do not mean to rest satisfied with that—the passage across the Atlantic can be performed, when the line of your trunk road is pushed over into Nova Scotia, in a week.

"The advantages of a road which is to shorten one third of the sailing distance between London and New York, Boston and Paris, are too many and too obvious, and too great for enumeration or description. They strike every one."

He proceeds to say—and to this portion of his letter I desire to call particular attention:

"There is, however, one point of view which I wish you would take of this railroad; for it is from that point that I wish to present some of its merits to public favor.

"You know that the system of fortifications formerly adopted for the defense of the coast, as expensive and as necessary as it was, has been rendered almost unnecessary by the system of railroads that has been introduced by the private enterprise and energy of public-spirited individuals like yourselves. We have seen the General Government expending millions of dollars for the erection of a single fortification, and which, when completed, was of no earthly value in times of peace to the citizens or occupations of the country. There it stood—a mere pile of brick and mortar—drawing heavily upon the public Treasury for repairs every year, and dragging out a burdensome existence in peace, that perchance it might be useful in war.

"Now, with the power which this railroad would give you to draw an army, if need be, from the great valley of the West, and in two days march it all the way by steam from

Memphis, on the Mississippi, to the frontiers of Maine, or even into foreign territory—with such a power, what do the people of Maine want with any forts and castles, except such as may be necessary to protect her seaport towns from the great guns of big ships?

"You know, too,—for you have only to visit the navy-yard in your State to see evidence of the fact,—that the plan was to collect in our navy-yard, and at great expense, large quantities of ship timber, and store it away for the emergencies of war. The emergencies never came, the timber rotted, and the money was lost.

"Now, in time of war, almost any timber that stands in the forests is good enough to build men-of-war. Even if built of green timber they would probably last through the war, when the vast majority of them, of whatever kind of timber they might be built, would be of no further use at any rate. Therefore, with railroads, what do we want of any more stores of ship timber for any such purposes? As for the Navy, railroads have converted almost every forest, 'from Maine to Georgia,' into a timber shed for it.

"Seeing, therefore, the important part which railroads are performing, and will perform in the system of national defenses—seeing that one of the principal objects which moved our fathers to form this Union, was 'the better to provide for the common defense;' and seeing that the public lands are a common fund which is being squandered, I am of opinion that a more righteous, wise, and beneficent dispensation could not be made of portions of these lands than to apply them to aid in the construction of railroads, and other works which provide so effectually as railroads do, for the common defense."

Not only will this road (in connection with the Atlantic ferry) be convenient for the traveler, enabling him to make the passage to Europe by the shortest and quickest sea route, and over a portion of this continent as yet but little known, but of a most interesting character; through the heart of Ireland—a land whose history and misfortunes, whose vicissitudes and sorrows, have interested us all—and by that grandest achievement of modern art and skill, the Tubular bridge;—not only will it afford direct advantage and protection to the trade and commerce of the country; speed the transmission of intelligence by mail and telegraph, and provide for the national defense; but it will tend indirectly, though materially, to enlarge the trade, and increase the wealth and population of every portion of the country. And here I am happy to be able to read the opinions of the Hon. Robert J. Walker, contained in a letter to John A. Poor, Esq., dated August 9, 1850:

"It was not in my power to comply with the request made by the committee in your name, to attend and address the Convention held at Portland on the 31st ult., with a view to the continuation of the great Eastern railway from your city to some point in Nova Scotia, nearest to Great Britain and Ireland. This would, indeed, be a work of vast importance, not only to your own State and city, to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but to the whole American Union, and to all the continents of the Old World. It is hoped that, with the improvements now being made in steamers, it might bring some good harbor in Ireland within five days of our American shores. It would greatly enlarge international commerce, and become a new bond to preserve the peace of the world. It would increase our exports to the British provinces and to Europe, with a corresponding augmentation of imports and revenue. It would bring Europe so near to America, that it would greatly facilitate the export and diffusion abroad of our Republican principles, without any diminution or deterioration of the supply for domestic consumption."

"I cannot doubt but that the present enlightened Ministry of Great Britain—the great advocates of a liberal commercial policy—will aid this noble enterprise; that our Government will extend to it all proper facilities by mail arrangements and otherwise; and that the rest will be accomplished by the well-known energy of New England, aided by the coöperation of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

"From the increased speed, it seems to me that the mail and passengers, between both countries, must be generally carried by this route; as also light articles of value."

The Hon. CHARLES SUMNER, United States Senator from Massachusetts, says in reference to this road:

"I cannot doubt that the material advantages, at least to the community, from such avenues of communication, will be in entire harmony with the greatness of the design. The producer, the manufacturer, and the consumer, will all be brought nearer together; intercourse of all kinds will be promoted; commerce will be quickened; markets will be opened; property, wherever touched by these lines, will be changed, as by a divining rod, into new values; and the great current of travel, like that stream in classic fable, or one of the rivers of California, will fill its channels with golden sands."

This enterprise, says the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT—

"Will be, when carried into effect, of very great utility to the American continent, and will afford the most important facilities to the commercial and social intercourse of the United States of America and Europe." * * *

"I have long looked forward to the commencement of this great enterprise, and I rejoice to see the movement making."

The President of the United States writes to the Portland Convention, as follows:

"Feeling, as I do, a deep interest in all subjects of internal improvement, which are calculated to develop the resources and advance the great interests of the country, I trust that your proposed convention may be productive of the most happy results, and that, through it, another link may be added to the chain which is binding more closely the great commercial interests of this country and Europe."

Mr. Chairman, this road will be a portion of the grand trunk railway that is to span the continent; it will be a link in the vast chain, of which the Missouri road may form a part, which is to be stretched from Halifax to San Francisco. This mighty work is fragmentary and incomplete, until the European and North American road is built. The convenience, the interest, the necessities of the country demand, and will compel its construction by the funds of the Government, if it cannot be built without. As well may you think of sending the mails from Washington to St. Louis by way of Boston, as believe that the country will be satisfied to send them to London by the present route, when they can be carried by another in two thirds of the time. In a case of the magnitude of this, the possible is the determining consideration. It is the peculiar strength of this plan that it cannot be partial in its benefits. Louisiana, Missouri, Georgia, and Illinois, with their vast products, will derive as much advantage from it as Maine. It will bring them nearer to the markets of the Old World.

For these reasons we ask, respectfully, but with confidence, for a grant of the lands of the United States, in which Maine has an interest in common with all the States, for the benefit of all. We ask it on national grounds. We may place our request on considerations which can apply to no other State, and be invoked in behalf of no other public work of the kind.

But, sir, there is another consideration which I desire to address to the House in behalf of this petition. It grows out of the relations of Maine to the General Government, in connection with the northeastern boundary question. The title of Maine to the territory she claimed was clear and unquestionable, and had so been regarded and pronounced by the General Government. Great Britain was extremely desirous of possessing that portion of our State lying north and east of the river St. John, and would probably never have consented to any arrangement which should not have embraced the cession of that territory to her;

regarding it, as she did, of great importance as affording a means of direct communication between her upper and lower Provinces. Well, sir, this Government was anxious to have the question settled. It will be remembered that the commercial and exporting sections of the country were exceedingly sensitive on the subject. In fact, Maine was pressed from all quarters to acquiesce in the terms that were proposed to her in 1842; she did acquiesce, and the treaty of Washington was concluded, and all the troublesome questions between these countries were put at rest. Rouse's Point was ceded to the United States, and other advantages secured. But Maine gave up between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 acres of her lands for the small sum of \$150,000—a territory worth, in the products of the forest alone, as experience has proved, much more than that amount. She felt at the time the inadequacy of the sum paid to her; but she was not unmindful of the importance of the treaty to the country, and fully appreciated the reasons of a national character which influenced the distinguished Secretary of State to desire to effect, if possible, an adjustment of the delicate and embarrassing questions which had so long threatened to disturb the peace of the country; and in a spirit of sacrifice and patriotic regard for the interests and wishes of the other States, which did her infinite honor, she yielded her consent to the dismemberment of her territory. And now that she asks of the General Government, in aid of a work within her limits, but of general convenience and importance, a grant of land less in quantity and value than she has ceded at the instance of the Government, and for the benefit of the country, she feels that her prayer will not be looked upon with less favor, to say the least, when presented in connection with the facts which I have stated.

But, Mr. Chairman, it would be unjust to the old States, not to urge this claim upon grounds common to them all. As it is quite probable that these lands are to be given, in greater or less quantities, to the States in which they lie, I have inquired for the reasons which should limit the grants to them alone. The deeds of cession from Virginia and other States, authorize no such distinction; and certainly it cannot be supposed to exist where the lands have been obtained by conquest or purchase from other Governments. I do not propose to argue here the general question of the distribution of the public lands among the States. It would be a work of supererogation, after all that has been said in Congress upon the subject, during the last twenty years. These discussions have shown, conclusively, that the lands are held in trust for the States. They were acquired by the blood and treasure of the old States, while yet many of those in which they lie were not even in the cradle of their existence. And are the States, by whose treasure and whose valor they were obtained, to be told now that they are none of theirs? Are they to be delayed and postponed in their petitions and requests for some share of them, till the new States shall become strong enough to stand up, and boldly avow their determination to be governed, in the disposition of them, by the "simple rule" of Rob Roy—

"——— the good old plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can?"

No, sir, I will not believe it. The justice and magnanimity of the land States, not less than their wisdom and sagacity, will dictate a different line of policy. I am disposed to be liberal to the new States. I believe that they ought to have, and will have, more than their *pro rata* share of them. At the same time, something is due to the old States. For very prudence, from a wise regard for their own interest, the new will so act towards the old as to prevent dissatisfaction and just complaint, and to retain their good will. This is worth a great deal—aye, is of infinitely greater value to them than all their broad acres. Gentlemen of the new States! give us something—enough to assure us of your good neighborhood—and you will not only secure the lion's share of these lands, but the strongest relations of friendship and fraternity between all the States. This will be no poor return for such manifest justice as is sought at your hands. I say at your hands—for the old States are so tied up with theories, and cursed by abstractionists who see no power for good, or equal and exact justice, under the Constitution, that even now we are powerless without your aid.

I would have the lands given in part to actual settlers, and the balance appropriated for internal improvements in the States. A system should be matured, by which, while the lands should be held and appropriated for the purposes I have indicated, evils and abuses in the management would be prevented. I am not sure that any of these bills and plans have been sufficiently matured, or are as safe and guarded in their details as they ought to be. Unless extreme care is taken now, we shall build up in the new States vast landed corporations and outrageous monopolies, which may become the instruments of oppression, and the sources of evils intolerable and interminable. Not doubting the policy of granting lands to the States, I would have it executed in a way which should secure to the States the objects in aid of which they are given, without imposing upon them a master who will sit upon their hopes and prospects like the genius of the nightmare. Sir, it is obvious that the evils to which I refer are mainly to be apprehended in the land States, in which the grants will become valuable in consequence of the works constructed therein. But all the grants should be upon conditions which will secure the sale of the lands to settlers, and prevent the aggregation of large estates in the hands of individuals or corporations. Perhaps it would be best that the sales should be made by the General Government, under a uniform system.

I have not thought very much upon this matter; but it has occurred to me, that a system by which alternate quarter sections should be appropriated or set apart for actual settlers, and the other sections, or their proceeds, given to the States, in some just proportion, for works of public improvement, might be adopted. By some such disposition of the lands, we should provide homes for persons unable to buy them; offer increased inducements to industry and frugality; facilitate, with all desirable rapidity, the settlement of the new country; render substantial aid to the new States in the construction of railroads; do something for the benefit of the old States; preserve harmony and good feeling between all the members of the Confederacy; check the tendencies to centralism, by withdrawing from the central Government the disposition of this vast fund; and effect, once

for all, a settlement of this land question. And who can tell the importance of a consummation like this? Till this question is settled, and finally settled, it will come up every session to plague you, to embarrass all your legislation; it will be connected with every measure of importance before Congress—with tariffs, river and harbor appropriations, coast appropriations, everything. The lands unappropriated will lead to more profligate legislation, to more trading and log-rolling than would be had from all other causes put together.

But I maintain that these lands should be used solely for the improvement and progress of the country, and never an acre sold off to pay our ordinary, annual expenses—to my mind, the most shiftless and improvident disposition that can be made of them. By the appropriation I have suggested, you would open new sources of wealth in the country, enhance the value of property, and increase the revenues of the Government. Nay, sir, by this policy, the latter would be speedily increased by an amount larger than the net receipts, under the present system, from the sale of the lands. From every point of view the Government would be the gainer by adopting this policy; and not only the Government, but the people for whose welfare it was established. The Government, after all, has something to do besides taking care of itself. It should have a policy, within the Constitution, in reference to all the great interests of the country, and that policy should keep company with the wants and spirit of the times. This is an age of wonderful activity in material progress. The purely metaphysical age is past. The ideal and the actual are joined in no unwilling matrimony. Thought runs itself out into the implements of human advancement and happiness. Our anointed men are practical men—those who “contrive to make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before.” They are the men who have been called, and who have come. What are they doing—what have they done? At the commencement of the present century we had no steam-boats ascending rivers against wind and tide, braving the ocean, and, I may say, bridging it, so as to bring nations the most remote into the same neighborhood; no railroads, “modern Acts of the Apostles of civilization,” as they have been fitly called, traversing States, and laying them off into parallelograms; no telegraphs, sending words round the globe in “less than forty seconds;” no daguerotype, staying the light and impressing the sun in the service of art. The development and useful employment of material forces is the work of this age, and the peculiar mission of our country. Looking at the history of the race and the progress of society, we may not doubt as to the character of the work we are commissioned to do. The solution of the problem of civilization is for us and our descendants on this continent. For it, we have been educated and set apart; for it and for us, the world has labored in all the past; for it and for us, this field, so ample and so favorable for the trial, had been reserved—discovered, and opened at the moment when, as it should seem, its discovery and occupation could be of the greatest service. When we consider the state of civilization at the time of the discovery of America; its preparation for new and higher triumphs; when we remember that Luther had been summoned and the Reformation an-

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nounced, before its settlement, and that men were privileged to bring with them to these shores, in the succeeding century, the great truths in respect to human rights and self-government so well and forcibly taught by a Sidney, a Marvell, and a Milton, and in which have been laid, broad, deep, and forever immovable, the foundations of civil and religious liberty, we can regard the circumstances of the discovery and settlement of America as scarcely other than providential. And not only is this the appointed theater for the development of the powers and capabilities of civilization, but here, we may believe, will be found the men best qualified to be the actors thereon. It was the fortune of this land to be peopled, in the main, by that most vigorous of the races, the Anglo-Saxon. But no race is one and entire. In no race has God mingled all the elements of greatness. And who shall say that in the circling of the suns there shall not arise on this continent—from the mixture and fusion now going on, under circumstances more favorable than ever existed before, of Saxon and Celt, and of the blood of all lands and climes, each of which we may believe has its own excellence—the race more noble, more full and perfect than the sun ever looked upon?

And, as with individuals, so with peoples, the first stages will be those of physical growth and strength; and how favorably are we situated for this stage of our progress! Apart from the hindrances and obstructions of the Old World, the evils and dangers of bad neighborhood, the temptations to war and unprofitable entanglements, our course is plain, our duty manifest. We should cultivate the arts of Peace, and reap and improve her victories. It is ours to open the resources of a vast country, to increase the implements and the rewards of labor; to multiply the means of living; to strengthen the bonds of commercial connection, and to facilitate social intercourse; thus contributing to the highest advancement in life in its intellectual and moral, not less than in its material aspects.

Sir, on this ample and favorable field, with these aids and advantages, we can be no laggards in the work which has been committed to us. We cannot ignore our position or responsibilities.

We have a public domain of many and many millions of acres, which we may suffer to melt away like frost-work in the sun—which may be

cut off piece-meal, acre by acre, to pay our ordinary debts—our tavern expenses and grocery bills; or they may be set apart for homes for the homeless, and for works of public improvement, enduring and beneficent memorials of the wisdom of Congress. In this way the settlement of the country would be promoted—the means of intercourse so extended, and the bonds of friendship and sympathy so enlarged and strengthened, that *disunion* would become an obsolete idea, and the word be unspoken and unknown.

And, of the hundreds of millions of acres of land which you own, can you not afford a single million for this work which the northeast State proposes? Will it not pay a thousand fold, in its influence on the settlement of the remaining lands, in its facilities to the business and intercourse of the country, and, finally, in the feeling of good will and confidence it will inspire?

There is another consideration, (hinted in the letter of Mr. Walker,) to which I would allude, not as a substantive argument in favor of the aid proposed, but which, I think, will not commend the enterprise I am advocating with diminished favor to your minds. I refer to the influence it must have, and the benefits it will confer, upon other countries than our own. It will open up the interior of Ireland to the light of day, and introduce there something of the spirit of industry and improvement that marks our own country and blesses it. It will speed the transmission of our ideas and the light of our example to the oppressed nations upon the other side of the Atlantic. It will enable our works to speak to them the more audibly and potently. What American can witness, with indifference, the progress of our ideas and institutions among the nations of the Old World? And who, as he sees them strengthened and established in every land, and under every sky, but will be moved to exclaim, in no spirit of vain boasting or unworthy exultation, nor yet with the sorrowful retrospection of *Aeneas*, as he beheld the memorials of ruined Ilium upon the shores of Carthage, but, rather, in the spirit of hope and unselfish joy and gratulation,

"Quis jam locus—

Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"

Sir, be liberal and generous to the new States, but be just to all, and forget not the interests of the whole country.

